

Department of the Air Force, DoD

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§ 842.91 Settlement agreements.

The claimant must sign a settlement agreement and general release before any payment is made.

Subpart L—Property Damage Tort Claims in Favor of the United States (31 U.S.C. 3701, 3711–3719)

§ 842.92 Scope of this subpart.

This subpart describes how to assert, administer, and collect claims for damage to or loss or destruction of government property through negligence or wrongful act. It does not cover admiralty, hospital recovery, or non-appropriated fund claims.

§ 842.93 Delegations of authority.

(a) *Settlement authority.* (1) The following individuals have delegated authority to settle, compromise, suspend, or terminate action on claims for \$20,000 or less and to accept full payment on any claim:

- (i) The Judge Advocate General.
- (ii) The Deputy Judge Advocate General.
- (iii) The Director of Civil Law.
- (iv) Chief, Deputy Chief, and Branch Chiefs, Claims and Tort Litigation Staff.

(2) The SJA of HQ 9AF (for CENTCOM), and the SJAs of PACAF and USAFE have delegated authority to settle, compromise, suspend, or terminate action on claims for \$15,000 or less and to accept full payment on any claim.

(3) SJAs of GCMs located in PACAF and USAFE and single base GCMs located in CONUS have delegated authority to settle, compromise, suspend, or terminate action on claims for \$15,000 or less and to accept full payment on any claim.

(4) SJAs of each Air Force base, station or fixed installation have delegated authority to settle, compromise, suspend, or terminate action on claims for \$10,000 or less and to accept full payment on any claim.

(b) *Redelegation of authority.* A settlement authority may redelegate it to a subordinate judge advocate or civilian attorney, in writing.

(c) *Authority to reduce, withdraw, or restore settlement authority.* Any superior settlement authority may reduce, withdraw, or restore delegated authority.

§ 842.94 Assertable claims.

A claim may be asserted in writing for loss of or damage to government property, against a tort-feasor when:

(a) Damage results from negligence and the claim is for:

(1) More than \$100.

(2) Less than \$100 but collection costs are small.

(b) The claim is based on a contract and the contracting officer does not intend to assert a claim under the contract. The contracting officer's intention not to assert a claim should be recorded in a memorandum for the record and placed in the claim file.

(c) The claim is for property damage arising from the same incident as a hospital recovery claim. (The two claims should be consolidated and processed under subpart N).

(d) The Tort-feasor or his insurer presents a claim against the government arising from the same incident. (Both claims should be processed together.)

(e) The claim is assertable as a counterclaim under an international agreement. (The claim should be processed under subpart H).

(f) The claim is based on product liability. HQ USAF/JACC approval must be obtained before asserting the claim.

§ 842.95 Non-assertable claims.

A claim is not assertable under this subpart when it is for:

(a) Reimbursement for military or civilian employees for their negligence claims paid by the United States.

(b) Loss or damage to government property:

(1) Caused by a nonappropriated fund employee acting in the scope of employment.

(2) For which a person has accountability and responsibility under the Report of Survey system.

(c) Loss or damage to non-appropriated fund property assertable under other provisions.

(d) Loss or damage caused by an employee of an instrumentality of the

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government in the absence of statutory authority to reimburse.

(e) Monies recovered against a foreign government or any of its political subdivisions. (HQ USAF/JACC may authorize this claim as an exception to the rule).

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§ 842.96 Asserting the claim.

The base SJA asserts the claim against the tort-feasor by mailing, certified mail, return receipt requested, the original and one copy of a "Notice of Claim" that includes the following:

(a) Reference to the statutory right to collect.

(b) A demand for payment or restoration.

(c) A description of damage.

(d) The date and place of incident.

(e) The name, phone number, and office address of claims personnel to contact.

§ 842.97 Referring a claim to the US Attorney or the Department of Justice.

All claims must be authorized for referral by HQ USAF/JACC prior to being sent to either the US Attorney or the Department of Justice. All claims for demands of more than \$20,000.00 which are not collected in full by a settlement authority will be referred (with HQ USAF/JACC approval) to DOJ.

§ 842.98 Statute of limitations.

The government must file suit within 3 years after the cause of action accrues. It accrues when a responsible US official knew or reasonably should have known the material facts that resulted in the claimed loss.

§ 842.99 Compromise, termination, and suspension of collection.

This section establishes the guidelines for compromise, termination, or suspension of a claim.

(a) Compromise of a claim is allowable when:

(1) The tort-feasor is unable to pay the full amount within a reasonable time. (A sworn statement showing the debtor's assets and liabilities, income, expenses, and insurance coverage

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should be obtained and included in the claim file).

(2) The Government is unable to collect a claim in full within a reasonable time even though the enforced collection proceedings are used for collection.

(3) The cost to collect does not justify enforced collection of the full amount.

(4) The government may have difficulty proving its case in court for the full amount claimed.

(b) Compromise is not allowable when there may be fraud, misrepresentation, or violation of antitrust laws. The Department of Justice must authorize compromise of such claims.

(c) Termination of collection is allowable when:

(1) The government is unable to collect the debt after exhausting all collection methods.

(2) The government is unable to locate the tort-feasor.

(3) The cost to collect will exceed recovery.

(4) The claim is legally without merit.

(5) The evidence does not substantiate the claim.

(d) Suspension of collection is allowable when:

(1) The government is unable to locate tort-feasor.

(2) The tort-feasor is presently unable to pay but:

(i) The statute of limitations is tolled or is running anew.

(ii) Future collection may be possible.

Subpart M—Claims Under the National Guard Claims Act (32 U.S.C. 715)

§ 842.100 Scope of this subpart.

This subpart explains how to settle claims against the United States arising out of the noncombat activities of the Air National Guard (ANG), when its members are acting within the scope of their employment and performing duty under 32 U.S.C. Contact HQ USAF/JACC for guidance on any claim for property damage, injury or death by the ANG which accrued prior to 29 December 1981.